

An Act Promoting Awareness for Safe Recreation in Public Waterways

Senate sponsor: Pat Jehlen
House sponsor: Denise Provost

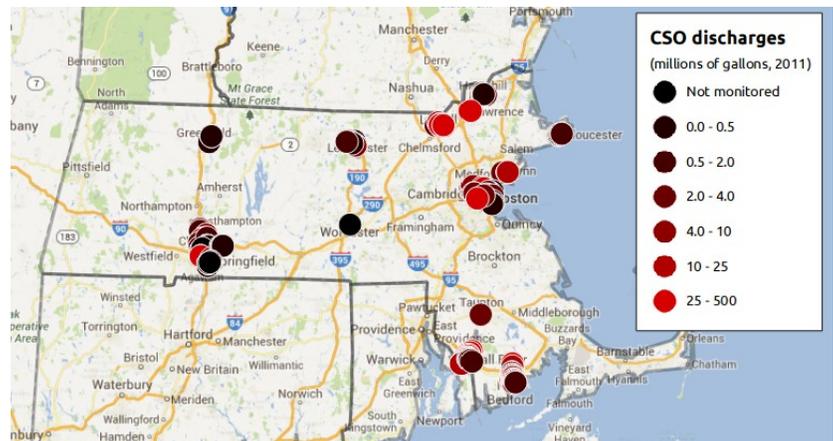
Millions of residents live near one of the Commonwealth's many rivers. The Charles, Connecticut, Merrimac, Mystic, and other major rivers wind through our communities and are valuable recreational resources. Unfortunately, **citizens presently have no way to know when man-made pollutant discharges render these rivers unsafe for boating and swimming.**



Untreated sewage discharging from a Combined Sewer Overflow outfall into the Mystic River.

The Problem

- When it rains, stormwater floods our Commonwealth's aging sewer systems. This mix of stormwater and wastewater can discharge into rivers and public waterways. These Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) often total millions of gallons of raw sewage per event.
- There are **181 active CSO outfalls** throughout the Commonwealth, which collectively discharged **2.8 billion gallons of sewage** into rivers and streams in 2011.
- Exposure to waters contaminated by untreated sewage discharges can cause inflammation of the intestines; respiratory, eye, and ear infections; skin rashes; hepatitis; and other diseases.



Map of Combined Sewer Overflow Outfall locations in the Commonwealth – scan the QR code below for an interactive map.

The solution

This bill would institute a **statewide sewage discharge notification system** so that Massachusetts residents will know when their rivers are safe for recreation and when CSO discharges make them unsafe. This bill would institute practices already followed by some municipalities, requiring:

- 1) All CSO outfall operators to install a **discharge flow monitoring meter**.
- 2) The Department of Environmental Protection to **centralize CSO discharge data** on their website and provide **instant email notifications** and **annual reports** on CSO discharges to media outlets and concerned residents.
- 3) That **clear signage** be placed at CSO outfalls and affected public access points.



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